

Comments on the Proposal for a REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL amending Regulations (EU) No 1316/2013 and (EU) No 283/2014 as regards the promotion of Internet connectivity in local communities (the WIFI4EU project).

This legislative proposal for widespread deployment of Wi-Fi is part of a [set of measures](#) took by the Commission on 14 September 2016 for the promotion of wireless Internet connectivity in UE through Wi-Fi and 5G [radiofrequency (RF) electromagnetic fields (EMF)].

The undersigned organizations consider the following on this set of measures:

1. – These measures are contrary to Articles 4, 168, 169 y 191 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU).

2.- Many early scientific and professional warnings on the EMF risks [extremely low frequency fields (ELF) and radiofrequency fields (RF)] are ignored. The project has not taken into account the latest research on the negative effects of EMFs on the human body. The Commission has not waited to know the results of the [Mobi-Kids study](#); the results could come into direct conflict with the project.

- Since 1998, conferences and both medical and scientific declarations worldwide, in line with the ALARA principle (As Low as Reasonably Achievable), call to apply the precautionary principle and more restrictive limits given the growing evidence of the non-thermal effects of exposure to non-ionizing radiation at all frequencies at exposure levels well below the maximum allowable. This implies important risks to the health of the general population and especially the most vulnerable groups. In 2015 two important appeals were emitted: the [Brussels International Scientific Declaration on Electromagnetic Hypersensitivity and Multiple Chemical Sensitivity](#), and the [International EMF Scientist Appeal to the United Nations](#). More than 220 scientists from 41 nations signed this later appeal; all of these scientists have published peer-reviewed papers on the biological or health effects of non-ionizing EMF (ELF and RF).

- The scientific reviews, as the [BioInitiative Report 2007 and subsequent status updates in 2012 and 2014](#) (more than 4,000 studies) and the [Monograph of the International Commission for Electromagnetic Safety \(ICEMS\)](#) on "Non-Thermal Effects and Mechanisms of Interaction Between Electromagnetic Fields and Living Matter" (2010), find that current levels of public safety are inadequate to protect public health, documenting current scientific evidence on the causal relationship of EMFs.

- Due to a part of these investigations, the WHO's International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) classified electromagnetic fields as **possibly carcinogenic to humans (Group 2B)** in 2001 [extremely low frequency fields (ELF)] and in 2011 [radiofrequency fields (RF)]. Director of the IARC Christopher Wild recommended "pragmatic measures to reduce exposure" especially for children. On October 2012, a [judgment of the Italian Supreme Court recognizes the causal link between prolonged use of mobile and cordless phones and the appearance of a brain tumor](#). The working group BioInitiative presented the results of new studies that endorse the classification as **carcinogens to humans (Group 1)**, both for ELF (2012) and for RF (2014 and 2016).

- The [European Cancer and Environment Research Institute \(ECERI\)](#) has identified electro hypersensitivity as an environmental disease caused by artificial EMF in its search for the environmental causes of cancer and the genetic and epigenetic mechanisms which promote the occurrence of cancer.

- Numerous [professional associations](#) echoed these calls: environmental medicine associations in different countries (EUROPAEM, Austria, France, Germany, USA, Ireland, Italy, Macedonia, United Kingdom, Switzerland, ...); professional associations of Medical doctors (Viena, Austria), pediatricians (Germany, USA,...), biologists (Galicia, Spain), [Doctors for safer schools](#), etc. The Austrian College of Physicians (2012) and the European Academy of Environmental Medicine or EUROPAEM (2016) respectively developed diagnostic and action guides for health problems and diseases related to EMFs.

3.- This set of measures fully disregard the cautionary recommendations of the European Parliament and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), and European advisory institutions. They are in contradiction to Directive 2003/4/EC on public access to environmental information.

- The [Resolution 1815 of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe \(PACE\)](#) on potential hazards of electromagnetic fields and their effects on the environment (2011), the resolutions of the [European Parliament](#) in 2008 ([P6_TA\(2008\)0410](#)) and in 2009 ([P6_TA\(2009\)0216](#)), the recommendations of the [European Environment Agency \(EEA\)](#) since 2007 (2009, 2011, 2013), the points 4.1/4.2/4.3 of the opinion COM (2011) 348 final - 2011/0152 (COD) of the

European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), the [Opinion on Electromagnetic hypersensitivity](#) approved (7 January 2015) by the EESC's Section for **Transport, Energy, Infrastructure and the Information Society (TEN)**, ...

- **Some of the protection measures proposed in these institutional recommendations have already been implemented in some countries (inside and outside the EU):** lower EMF exposure limits; Wi-Fi banned in Nursery Schools and WiFi on "OFF" in elementary schools (France, ...); prohibition of advertising and sale of specific mobile phones for children (France and Belgium); informations to learn about risks and reduce exposure (European Environment Agency, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, India, Germany, Greece, United Kingdom, Russia, Switzerland, etc.). Different degrees of recognition of electrosensitivity (EHS): functional disability (Sweden -2000-), diagnosis code in the ICD-10 (Nordic countries -2000-); population to be protected (public agencies of [Canada](#), [USA](#), Russia, ...), judicial judgments between 2011-2016 ([Germany](#), [Australia](#), France (1, 2, 3, 4), United Kingdom, Spain (1, 2). The option of withdrawal of "smart meters" installed ([Quebec](#), Canada, 2015) ...
- The European Parliament (2009) expressed high concern "about the fact that insurance companies are tending to exclude coverage for the risks associated with EMFs from the scope of liability insurance policies". In [7 January 2015](#), the EESC Section TEN requested a normative modification that prevents it. **Will the European Commission take on the risks that are not assumed by insurance companies?**
- **The set of measures took by the Commission not in line with the Directive 2003/4/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 January 2003 on public access to environmental information:** The impact assessment of the WiFi4EU project does not include the additional environmental impact of these artificial EMFs, particularly in schools and hospitals.

4.- These measures violate International Conventions signed by the European Union: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006), the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU of 2000 (2000), and the Aarhus Convention of 1998 (binding since 2005) on access to information, public participation in decision-making and access to justice in environmental matters.

- In items 1.4, 3.3 and 8.1 of the [Opinion on Electromagnetic hypersensitivity](#) (7 January 2015), the EESC's Section TEN showed the **violation of the fundamental rights of EHS people**, which are subject to a false dichotomy between these rights and the right of free communication. Furthermore, the WiFi4EU project does **not include the EMF environmental impact assessment of the EMF exposure**, with special relevance in sensitive areas such as schools and hospitals, **nor the appropriate participatory channels** in its deployment, guaranteed in the Aarhus Convention.

5.- For the above reasons, Internet connectivity must comply with the precautionary principle of TFEU through technologies and techniques biocompatible and sustainable from the point of view of environmental and human health, starting with the implementation of a European network of coaxial / optical fiber cable, in line with the European and pan-European parliamentary resolutions and EU consultative bodies:

- The [PACE Resolution 1815](#) recommends "take all reasonable measures to reduce exposure to electromagnetic fields", promoting "technologies which are just as efficient but whose effects are less negative on the environment and health" -or that do not have them- (8.1.5) and promoting a wired Internet connection in schools (8.3.2).
- The point 3 of the [European Parliament resolution](#) of 2 April 2009 on health concerns associated with electromagnetic fields (2008/2211(INI)), underlines that in addition to reducing EMF exposure limits, "the Commission, working in coordination with experts from Member States and the industries concerned (electricity companies, telephone operators and manufacturers of electrical appliances including mobile phones), should draw up a guide to available technology options serving to reduce exposure to EMFs". Furthermore, the point 4.3 of the CESE's Opinion [[COM\(2011\) 348 final — 2011/0152 \(COD\)](#)] recommends reducing the environmental exposure to EMFs, "introducing the best available technologies at economically acceptable costs".

"There are many examples of the failure to use the precautionary principle in the past, which have resulted in serious and often irreversible damage to health and environments. Appropriate, precautionary and proportionate actions taken now to avoid plausible and potentially serious threats to health from EMF are likely to be seen as prudent and wise from future perspectives. We must remember that precaution is one of the principles of EU environmental policy". Professor Jacqueline McGlade, Executive Director of the EEA, 2007.

Madrid, 27 november 2016

Signed by Minerva Palomar Martínez, President of “Electro y Químico Sensibles por el Derecho a la Salud” (EQSDS) and member of the Coordinating Group of the “Plataforma Estatal Contra la Contaminación Electromagnética” (PECCEM), on behalf of EQSDS and PECCEM

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The PECCEM is a member of the IEMFA and the *European Coordination of organizations for a regulation of Electromagnetic Field (EMF) exposure, which truly protects public health*. This Coordination is driving the [European Manifesto in Support the ECI in favour of the precautionary regulation of the EMF exposure](#). Amongst the [signatories to this European Manifesto](#) there are scientists, researchers and experts, as well as professional bodies and associations and representatives of civil society organizations (from health advocates, consumers, neighbours, environmentalists, ecologists, labour union, parents of students, people with central sensitization syndromes -electro-hypersensitivity, multiple chemical sensitivity, chronic fatigue, fibromyalgia, etc.- , brain tumour patients, concerned citizens and activists associations working in the field of electromagnetic pollution), coming from 25 countries (Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, India, Ireland, Italy, Macedonia, Netherlands, Panama, Poland, Portugal, UK, Russia, South Africa, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and USA).